

Message Text

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TAGS: OREP (PERCY, CHARLES) KU, XF

SUBJECT: CODEL PERCY - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DURING VISIT TO KUWAIT

SUMMARY: QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWING RECEPTION BY AMBASSADOR FOR SENATOR CHARLES PERCY PROVIDED INTERESTING AND USEFUL INSIGHT INTO THINKING AND CONCERNS OF ARAB ELITE IN KUWAIT AND, PRESUMABLY, OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF SESSION WHICH CONCERNED MAINLY WITH ARAB/ISRAELI DISPUTE AND RESULTED IN UNIFORM PRAISE OF SENATOR'S PERFORMANCE.

1. AT RECEPTION AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE JANUARY 10, SENATOR PERCY FIELDDED QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM HIGHLY ARTICULATE MEMBERS OF KUWAIT ELITE -- TOP GOVERNMENT LEADERS, BUSINESSMEN, NEWSMEN AND EDUCATORS. THEY WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY POSE QUESTIONS AND EXPRESS OPINIONS AND WERE OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED BY SENATOR'S OPENENNESS, FRANKNESS AND INTEREST IN THEIR CONCERNS. AFTERWARDS A NUMBER TOLD EMBASSY OF THEIR APPRECIATION FOR BEING INCLUDED IN THIS SESSION AND THE HIGHLY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION SENATOR MADE ON THEM. THAT, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, HE WAS PREPARED GO ON THE RECORD

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WAS FURTHER PLUS IN THEIR EYES. ALSO SOME WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED

BY
HIS KNOWLEDGE OF MIDEAST SITUATION AND ITS COMPLEXITIES.

2. NEARLY ALL POINTS RAISED CONCERNED U.S. POLICY TOWARDS MIDEAST AND MOST RELATED TO U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. THERE WAS RELATIVELY LITTLE MENTION OF OIL, PRICING OR OPEC WEALTH. WHILE PART OF REASON UNDOUBTEDLY LIES IN FACT THAT THIS IS DIRECTION QUESTIONING TOOK AT OUTSET, IT DOES INDICATE EXTENT OF CONCERN ON THIS ISSUE AMONG KUWAITI INTELLIGENSIA. IT BROUGHT HOME ONCE AGAIN THAT KUWAITIS ARE ARABS AND WHATEVER DIFFERENCES THEY MAY HAVE WITH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, THEY SHARE SAME OPTIC WITH OTHER ARABS ON ISRAEL AND U.S. MIDEAST POLICY. IT ALSO SHOWS THAT THEY VERY MUCH WANT TO HAVE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH U.S. AND WANT TO SEE THIS IMPEDIMENT REMOVED. MANY OF THOSE PRESENT (SOME 40) ARE U.S. EDUCATED, WHICH IS ADDITIONAL REASON FOR VALUING AMERICAN TIES AND ASSOCIATIONS. THIS FACT IS INCREASINGLY TRUE AMONG KUWAITI LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS, AS MORE COME BACK FROM THE U.S. AND ASSUME IMPORTANT POSITIONS HERE.

3. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS INCLUDED: WHILE ARABS WANT ACCOMMODATION, WHY DOES U.S. GO ALONG WITH ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE? WHY DOES U.S. ALWAYS SEEM TO OVERLOOK THE ARABS? WHAT IS U.S. DOING TO RESOLVE CONFLICT? WHY DOES U.S. PRESS INACCURATELY REPORT ARAB VIEWS AND STATEMENTS, INCLUDING CHARGE THAT ARAB RULERS WANT TO PUSH ISRAEL INTO SEA, WHICH CANNOT BE DOCUMENTED? WHY DOES U.S. FOLLOW POLICY THAT MAKES SOVIET PENETRATION OF ARAB WORLD EASIER? PEACE IS NOT IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST, AS IT WOULD BECOME INSIGNIFICANT COUNTRY THROUGH LOSING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND THROUGH ITS INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS. HOW CAN MASSIVE U.S. REARMING OF ISRAEL LEAD TO PEACE? SECRETARY KISSINGER'S BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW MUST HAVE BEEN AIMED AT CREATING CONFUSION. U.S. SHOULD PUSH ISRAELIS TO DEAL WITH PLO.

4. AMONG MAIN POINTS SENATOR MADE IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS ARE IN CAPSULE FORM:

-- U.S. WILL USE ITS INFLUENCE TO ACHIEVE MODERATION AND MOVE TOWARDS PEACE, BUT ARABS MUST ALSO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TOWARDS SAME END.

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-- U.S. CANNOT SETTLE DISPUTE, BUT CAN BE USEFUL BECAUSE OF CREDITIBILITY ON BOTH SIDES. KISSINGER STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL.

-- AMERICANS TODAY BETTER REALIZE IMPORTANCE OF MIDEAST AND BETTER UNDERSTAND ARAB VIEWS.

-- AMERICANS THINK, WHETHER CORRECTLY OR NOT, THAT SOME ARAB

LEADERS HAVE WANTED TO SEE ISRAEL ELIMINATED AND THIS IS WHAT THEY THINK ARAFAT SAID IN HIS U.N. SPEECH.

-- U.S. HAS ECONOMIC INTEREST IN MIDEAST, BUT ALSO MORAL INTEREST. U.S. HAS MAIN CONCERN THAT 5TH ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, WHICH IS "UNTHINKABLE", NOT BREAK OUT.

-- WHILE ISRAELI "HAWKS" EXIST, MANY ISRAELI LEADERS WANT PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND ARE WILLING MAKE CONCESSIONS TO ACHIEVE IT.

-- PRESS TREATMENT, INCLUDING IN ARAB WORLD, OF KISSINGER BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW IS DISTORTION OF HIS VIEWS AND U.S. POLICY. U.S. POLICY NOT AIMED AT CONFRONTATION WITH OPEC, BUT ONLY TO LAY GROUNDWORK SO THAT CONSUMERS CAN HAVE MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH OPEC.

-- DOES PLO REALLY REPRESENT PALESTINIANS? THOSE WHO FINANCE PLO SHOULD USE INFLUENCE TO PREVENT EXTREMIST PLO ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS.

-- U.S. SENDING OF ARMS TO ARAB COUNTRIES IS "SIGNAL" OF DESIRE FOR BALANCE AND EXPRESSION OF BELIEF THAT CONFIDENCE IN NATION'S STRENGTH PERMITS MOVING TOWARDS ACCOMMODATION.

-- TO REACH PEACE U.S. MAY HAVE TO OFFER CERTAIN GUARANTEES.

5. OFF THE RECORD ANSWER WAS TO QUESTION ON U.S. REACTION TO STRIKE BY EITHER SIDE. SENATOR SAID THAT WHICHEVER SIDE STARTED WAR WOULD BE BLAMED AND WOULD SUFFER MAJOR DIMINUTION OF SUPPORT IN CONGRESS AND AMONG AMERICAN PEOPLE. SENATOR HIMSELF WOULD TAKE THIS POSITION.
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